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ABSTRACT

This newsletter begins with an editorial on the purposes and methods of individualizing foreign language instruction. Mirta R. Vega describes an individualized Spanish course for English speakers, produced by the Dade Co. Public Schools, Miami, Florida. Also presented is a list, compiled by Robert McClennan, of the potential problems of foreign language instruction individualization. Other entries include a review of Ronald Havelock's book, "The Change Agent's Guide to Innovation in Education," comments on various instructional materials, a description of the components of individualization, suggestions for the use of assistants in language instruction, and a list of summer programs for 1975. An article on foreign language communication concludes the newsletter. (LG)

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INDIVIDUALIZATION

of

FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

in

AMERICA

December 1974, VIII
EDITORIAL COMMENT

INDIVIDUALIZING FOREIGN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION is an educative process intended to meet individual needs to the maximum extent possible in and through a given language subject matter. The process implies neither distraction from the general search for the common good nor distraction from subject matter content. The process of individualizing instruction aims to create conditions which will enhance an individual's social growth in groups and his mastery of any subject matter content.

For purposes of individualization, subject matter content may be divided into two categories: 1) the "universal" language, and 2) "community-related" language skills.

The "universal" language content forms the traditional foreign language curriculum which Lafayette (Curriculum Report, NASSP, 3:1, October, 1973) calls "the closed system." Essentially, the closed foreign language system is a very long continuum -- too long for many American students -- against which the performance of most individuals can be unfavorably compared at any time. Yet, opportunities to learn within the universal language must be provided for the production of fully competent foreign language users. Obviously, if individualization is at all feasible, teachers must be able to individualize instruction with learning the universal language as a goal.

A "community-related" language skill is a particular segment of language of high relevance to a particular population at a given time and in a given place. The high relevance may stem from any number of causes -- the ethnic composition of the community, the existence of unusual conditions of overriding interest in the community, particular points of view espoused there, an unusually charismatic teacher, etc. The condition may be temporary or relatively permanent.

The minicourses one reads about (Lafayette, *Ibid.*; Love and Honig, Options and Perspectives, 1973; Jarvis, Gilbert A. Responding to New Realities, 1974, etc.) are probably examples of such

community language interests and needs which have been exploited by resourceful teachers.

A basic problem of our time is whether to attempt to individualize instruction within the universal language or through a "community-related" language need. We believe Lafayette's observation is worth noting: the closed (universal?) system is no longer dominant; the "new premise," which we are terming the community - related language skills, is gaining support.

Edited by:

Ronald L. Dougher
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John F. Burkman
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AN EXAMPLE OF POSITIVE REACTION TO
COMMUNITY NEEDS:
INDIVIDUALIZING SPANISH
FOR SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH

DIVISION OF INSTRUCTION
Miami Dade Public Schools, Miami, Florida

The Individualizing Spanish for Speakers of English Program is an ESBA, Title III project in its second year of operation. The program's staff writes lessons and produces tapes and visuals to make up packages of self-instructional materials. This program has two main parts:

1. The Trunk covers material taught in Spanish Levels I and II.
2. The Vocational Branches deal with the Spanish areas of automotive services, barber/beauty work, food services, health services, radio/TV repair, and retail sales.

The program provides for large and small group instruction, as well as individual work. Self-instruction through reading and writing exercises, all under the guidance of the teacher, is also included.

Teachers who field-test the materials have been selected from public and private schools, adult community schools, and Miami Dade Community College. They all receive special in-service training.

During the 1973-74 school year, 21 teachers and 771 students used the new materials with excellent results.

Mirta R. Vega, Project Director
Dade County Public Schools
Miami, Florida

Bibliographical Notes

A few books on individualizing foreign language instruction printed since 1973 are:

1. Gougher, Ronald L., ed. Individualization of Instruction in Foreign Languages: A Practical Guide. Philadelphia: Rand McNally, 1972, 1973.
2. _____. Teacher's Guide for Adaptation of Basic Texts for Individualizing Instruction-German. Detroit: Advancement Press of America.
3. _____. and Smith. Teacher's Guide for Adaptation of Basic Texts for Individualizing Instruction-Spanish. Detroit: Advancement Press of America.
4. _____. and Wolfe. Teacher's Guide for Adaptation of Basic Texts for Individualizing Instruction-French. Detroit: Advancement Press of America.
5. Gritter, Frank M. and Fred H. Laleike. Individualized Foreign Language Instruction. Naperville, Illinois: Natural Textbook Co., 1973.
6. Logan, Gerald. Individualized Foreign Language Learning: An Organic Process. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1973.

What are the Potential Problems?
How Some Students Reacted

The following list of possible weaknesses was compiled by an experienced teacher and innovator, Robert McClellan of Mountain View, California. It may be well for us to be aware of the potential for such student reactions.

1. It is hard to have enough self-discipline to keep working by oneself.
2. I do not have the discipline needed to work in this type program.
3. It is difficult to adjust to this new type program.

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4. It is easy to get behind the pace needed to cover the "normal" amount of material in a year.
5. There is not enough pressure to keep you working.
6. There is too much freedom in the class.
7. It is too easy to goof off.
8. It is too easy to cheat by copying the work of other students.
9. I do not think students can teach themselves a foreign language, and they have to in this program.
10. There is a lack of discipline in the class which is annoying.
11. Students don't seem to behave as well as in a regular class.
12. The classroom is too noisy or there is too much confusion in the room.
13. Classes are overcrowded.
14. There is too much pressure to complete enough material by a deadline.
15. The program seems to be rather unorganized.
16. The students often do not know what they are to do next.
17. The teacher does not explain the material enough.
18. The teacher is often so busy that you cannot get help when you want it.
19. The material becomes boring as the year progresses.
20. Some material in the text is not well enough explained (or not explained at all).
21. There is too much writing in the program.
22. There is not enough speaking in the program.
23. I don't learn how to pronounce the sounds very well.
24. The units are too long.
25. The tests are too long.
26. I often felt rather alone in the class.
27. We rarely did things together in a class.
28. The teacher does not conduct drills as in a regular class.
29. We did not have any other activities such as movies, slides, songs, etc.
30. You try to go too fast and then you do not learn anything really well. (Pacing)
31. You do not learn as much as in a regular class.
32. It is hard to learn under such a program.
33. We do not have enough tape recorders.
34. There is not enough reading or writing practice.
35. There is not enough contact with the foreign culture.
36. I have to depend too much on the tape recorder.
37. I did not like the student aides.

38. The teacher did not allow me enough freedom.
39. The teacher allowed too much freedom.
40. I don't have enough initiative to work in such a program.

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College Newsletter Available

As a result of continued cooperation among participants in the seminar on individualizing foreign language instruction (West Chester, 1973), a newsletter for college teaching has been developed. Information can be obtained from Professor Judy Baughin, Raymond Walters College, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Are We Changing Agents?

Ronald G. Havelock has produced a fine book, The Change Agent's Guide to Innovation in Education, Educational Technology Publications, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. It is recommended that foreign language teachers read it. Some specific ideas he provides as clues to the change agent in education are:

Most of those who will want to use this book will not be in positions of power or authority with respect to the system they want to change. Nevertheless, it is possible to be effective working from within and from below. A few special points are in order for change agents in this situation.

First of all, diagram the organization as a system (see Stage II and Stage V). What are its goals, norms, key subsystems, and key people?

Second, with your diagram in hand or in mind, look for allies and potential allies. If you have a concern, the chances are that many others silently or vocally share your concern. Some of these allies will be insiders like yourself but some will be outsiders, community members, and others who can become part of a team working together.

Third, build your own "expert power." Know your "innovation" inside and out, its strengths, and its weaknesses; know what evaluations have been done; what objections might be raised by administrators, teachers, and students, and have answers ready for these objections.

Fourth, be persistent if you know you have a good case. Many studies have shown that successful change agents try harder and keep on trying. Your advantage over the outside expert consultant is that you are there and you won't go away.

Fifth, if you have an adversary (usually someone over you or further up the hierarchy than you are), analyze the situation from his point of view. Total up the pros and cons from his vantage point. This exercise should help you to understand how he might be won over or bypassed. It may even show you something about your innovation that should be changed.

Sixth, develop a sense of timing and act strategically; wait for the opportune moment and don't confront the opposition impulsively but only when there are other forces working in your favor.

Last, but not least, be prepared to let others share the credit. People feel rewarded if they feel they have done something for themselves; if the change is identified as "yours," they may not be so enthusiastic. This may be especially important for administrators who are concerned about maintaining their leadership image.

(from page xi in The Change Agent's Guide...)

Comment on Materials from Publishers

While materials--packets, workbooks, LAPS--from publishers can help us to save time, let us not allow these materials to become 'musts' for a successful process of individualizing instruction. They can be good, time-saving devices, supporting excellent components essential to individualizing instruction; however, history tells that other teachers in other times surrendered the teaching function to materials and lost control of the educational process. Must we not be careful to diagnose carefully and correctly where and when special materials are to be used? Should we not emphasize the importance of the diagnostic work of the teacher in each local school as primary and the materials as secondary?

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Philosophical Thoughts to Keep in Mind
When Individualizing Instruction

- I. When a leader is seriously interested in change, he must learn to live with deferred and ambiguous results from time to time.
- II. As a successful change agent one must keep on good terms with hope.
- III. Why ask for so much? We are really such a small spot on the teleological curve. Do what we can for ourselves and, ultimately, for others.

DO YOU WANT TO RECEIVE INFORMATION
AND MATERIALS?

We invite readers to submit names and addresses for our mailing list so that we can provide the profession with materials and services.

Name _____
Address _____
School _____

Adapting Materials:

Project Completed at West Chester
State College--Accepted by USOE

A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO THE ADAPTATION OF BASIC TEXTS FOR INDIVIDUALIZATION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION consists of four basic parts: A general overview of the process of adaptation followed by illustrative examples of adapted materials in FRENCH, GERMAN, and SPANISH Appendices.

Basic steps for adaptation of texts include:

- I. Determine the necessary materials for a given segment of the course.
- II. Define the performance objectives for each step.
 - Be precise
 - Give exact directions, references.
- III. Prepare a list of learning activities
 - Balance skills
 - Oral activities relevant, practical
 - Translate for clarity.
- IV. Establish evaluative criteria for each objective and each unit.
- V. Prepare a student orientation sheet
 - Explain evaluation
 - Suggest activities, study techniques.

VI. Dovetail additional activities

--Games, skills, songs, filmstrips, movies, etc.

The text is keyed to the illustrative Appendices in order to permit readers to see how some teachers have successfully carried out techniques for individualizing instruction.

A Game About Components

Have a group of teachers list, in order of preference, the following components for individualizing instruction. The idea is for teachers to make choices about what is most important down to what is least important to make a successful process of individualizing instruction go. It is interesting to see who is very teacher-oriented, who is materials-oriented, and who has an orientation involving a healthy combination of both.

Components for individualizing instruction include:

1. Specially prepared, commercially published materials
2. Varied methods and teaching techniques
3. Varied content
4. Materials built around performance objectives
5. Learning activities packets
6. Teachers who trust and respect students
7. Traditional or conventional materials adapted by teachers for individualization
8. Teachers who are sensitive to student needs
9. An effective system of record keeping
10. Teachers with a spirit of freedom and inventiveness
11. Accent on the spoken language
12. Teachers acting as facilitators of learning
13. Materials borrowed from other teachers experienced in individualization
14. Students who want to learn
15. Teachers willing to allow students to learn without help
16. A system of variable credits
17. Use of teacher assistants
18. Sophisticated media located in media centers
19. Conversation groups
20. Student contracts

This list was developed by Lester McKim, Bellevue, Washington.

Some Practical Ideas for Using
Native Assistants in Secondary Schools

This sheet is given to native assistants by
Robert McClennan of Mountain View, California:

Suggested Duties for Assistants
and Guests who are Native Speakers

- I. Bring interesting realia to demonstrate and discuss. Wear native costume if you like.
- II. Engage students in conversation. Please try to follow the following guidelines:
 1. Begin slowly and simply, establish contact and allow student to warm-up to you and the language.
 2. Be helpful and patient--student will make many errors and may have difficulty hearing you because of embarrassment and excitement.
 3. Be German--shake hands, gesture, etc.
- III. Help a student with work in his book:
 1. Give dictations.
 2. Ask helpful questions about the chapter he is studying.
 3. Help him pronounce words with which he is having difficulty.
 4. Give him short oral quizzes and translations.
 5. Help him find answers to written questions.
 6. Correct students quizzes, dictations, spelling, etc.
- IV. Ask a student to read to you from his book or from one of a similar level of difficulty--allow him mistakes but gradually attempt to improve his pronunciation. This is also a good time to work with student on translation and grammar.
- V. Present or teach a song, dance, poem, etc., if you would and if students appear to be responsive to what you have to offer.
- VI. We need music (records and tapes) and magazines for the German "Sprachinsel". If you are interested in contributing to the German program at Mountain View High School please call Mr. McClennan.

1974 Summer Workshops
on
Individualizing Instruction
West Chester State College

150 students and staff from over twenty states and foreign countries participated in seminars devoted to individualizing instruction during July and August, 1974. Workshops will be repeated in Summer, 1975.

A major presentation of Individualizing Instruction will be given by June Phillips, Howard Altman, and Ronald Gougher at the national meeting of ACTFL in Denver 1974. It will focus on the past and present for Individualizing Foreign Language Instruction.

Programs for Summer 1975

Workshops on Performance Alternatives and
Individualizing Foreign Language Instruction
West Chester State College
July 8-18; August 4-9, 1975

The workshops will be held from 9 am into the early evening daily. We propose to present information and discuss readings as well as discuss local school problems with reference to individualizing foreign language instruction.

There will be some required pre-reading. We encourage each participant to assess one local school with relation to individualizing instruction, based on the information in the readings and his own experience.

The idea is to provide exposure to and discussion of theory, but also to assist in program planning for implementation in the schools of America. We are interested in both academic and community-related language programs.

After registering with the Foreign Language Department by mail in a letter addressed to Ronald L. Gougher or in the forms provided here,

participants would naturally have to go through some of the normal West Chester registration procedures later.

I urge any one who is interested to make some commitment as early as possible, since we will close the first workshop after 50 participants have been chosen, based on interest, date of application, and geographical distribution; the second workshop will be limited to 20 participants.

A Workshop in Real Communication
That Makes Foreign Language Relevant,
Easier to Learn and More Enjoyable to Teach

Who Am I?

Am I An Important Person?

Can I accomplish Meaningful Things?

Students are asking these questions. They are interested in their roles in life. As foreign language teachers, we believe we can answer them positively if we make foreign language a tool for meaningful communication about real things such as getting students to talk about things they value, talking about things that disturb them, and how do they spend their free time. We have developed techniques that are structured "safe" and non-judgmental that effectively use the target language.

Participants will take part in newly-developed communication exercises as both group members and leaders.

Detach slip below and address all inquiries to: Ronald L. Gougher, Associate Professor of German, West Chester State College, West Chester, Pennsylvania. 19380.

Name _____
Home Address _____
School Address _____
Home Phone _____
Language Taught _____

Please bill me for Tuition, Room & Board plus Administrative Fee.

Please extend us the courtesy of early application so that we can serve you in our tasks the year round and ensure professional treatment of your requests.
